

TURNING INWARD

Free to pursue more integrative approaches to learning, I turned inward to consider the spaces in my own life that inform my perspective. Having embraced teaching and learning across various contexts, I sought out diverse pedagogical perspectives. I continue to find the notion of praxis particularly interesting. Understanding praxis as the enactment of my theoretical assumptions about teaching, I have found it alluded to by many scholars but not explored across contexts. Freire (1981) has discussed praxis as a synthesis of theory and practice, each informing the other. His agenda in its most uncomplicated form, though, has been to deconstruct knowledge to reveal its underpinnings of power, privilege, and utility. Cole and Knowles (2001, 2008) have explored the reflexive relationship between theory and practice in their work on practitioner research but their work is primarily situated within schooling practices. Schön (1995) has discussed at length the benefits of practitioners reflecting on their reflection, but he has not explicitly named praxis as this critical analysis of practice. Although these scholars are among those whose research is foundational to my own, none has untangled for me the implications for praxis as we teach and learn across contexts.

I assume that by making explicit the application of theoretical findings, and committing to reconceptualising continuously that which is learned from lived experience, theorists and practitioners alike improve practice. In this continuous commitment to understanding practitioners and learners as multifaceted individuals, reflexivity is central to becoming more awake to the theoretical implications of praxis development. Drawing from Ellsworth (2005), Kooy and DeFreitas (2007), Richardson and St. Pierre (2005), and Wheatley (2009), I position writing as a way of knowing and, in doing so, present narrative as perspective, process, and product while examining epistemologically my claims of knowledge. Further, my intent is to recall learning moments situated within three unique learning environments—post-secondary faculties of education, the field, and corporate learning organisations—that position lived experience as central to developing notions of praxis that are operating, replicable, and transformative.